



## ELK GROVE COMMUNITY SERVICES DISTRICT

FIRE DEPARTMENT  
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*For Immediate Release: November 5, 2002*

### **Elk Grove CSD Fire Department News Release:**

#### **FATAL FIRE DETERMINED TO BE ACCIDENTAL**

Date/Time of Incident: November 1, 2002, 11:42 p.m.

Type of Emergency: Structure Fire

Location(s): 11391 Franklin Boulevard

Incident Number: 02119371

**Elk Grove, CA** – The Elk Grove Community Services District's (CSD) Fire Investigation Unit released today their preliminary findings from Friday's double fatal trailer fire in Franklin. Foul play has been ruled out as a likely cause of the fire.

Elk Grove CSD fire crews were dispatched at 11:42 p.m. Friday night (11/01/02) to a trailer fire at a Franklin dairy farm. First arriving fire crews reported a 60' x 12' trailer home fully involved in fire. Seven fire companies – approximate 20 firefighters – were deployed to fight the fire and brought the blaze under control at 12:05 a.m. after one trailer was completely destroyed and another was moderately damaged. Two bodies were found inside the destroyed trailer. Fire and law enforcement investigators were dispatched to determine the cause of these deaths and the fire.

Evidence collected at the scene, combined with initial autopsy results, have ruled out the likelihood of foul play. Fire investigators have determined that the fire started accidentally and was most likely caused by a combination of alcoholic beverage consumption and late night cooking, or heating, on the trailer's kitchen stove. Investigators believe that one of the victims was using the stove and apparently fell asleep. Further inspection of the trailer also revealed that the building may not have contained an approved heating unit, nor a smoke detector.

The identities of the victims are not yet available, however, information released to fire investigators by the Sacramento County Coroner's Office concludes that both victims are adult males. One of the victims is believed to be an employee of the dairy. The other victim is believed to have worked at a landscape nursery on Grantline Road in Elk Grove.

"A \$5 smoke detector could have given these men the time they needed to wake up and get out," said Elk Grove Fire Marshal, Steve Foster. "Every farmer in California should stop and take notice of this tragedy. Deaths like these can and should be prevented by outfitting all farm labor housing with at least one smoke detector and a portable fire extinguisher."

In addition to the Elk Grove CSD Fire Department, investigators from Sacramento County Code Enforcement, Building, and Sheriff's Departments and Child Protective Services remain active in this case. Further investigation into the living conditions of the remaining housing units is expected.

The Elk Grove CSD Fire Department wants to remind the public that, according to the United States Fire Administration, roughly 4,500 people die in fires each year in the United States. Approximately one quarter of

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all residential fires are cooking related. The Elk Grove CSD Fire Department urges the public to review the following safety tips from the National Fire Protection Association:

**Be Kitchen Wise:** Don't cook if you have been drinking alcohol or taking medication that makes you drowsy. Also, don't leave your cooking unattended. Consider setting a kitchen cooking timer to remind you to turn off burners and the oven. Use oven mitts and wear clothes with tight-fitting sleeves when you cook. If a pan of food catches fire, using a pot holder, carefully slide a lid over it and turn off the burner.

**Heat Your Home Safely:** Install and maintain an approved heating system. Portable space heaters should be located at least 3 feet away from flammable materials and come equipped with a tip-over shut-off switch.

**Smoke with Caution:** Don't smoke in bed, while drinking alcohol, or while on medication that may make you drowsy. Wet the contents of ashtrays before dumping them into wastebaskets.

**Install smoke detectors:** Install and/or maintain smoke detectors on every level of your home. Make sure that one is located nearest sleeping quarters. If you are hearing impaired, use tested and approved detectors that have a louder alarm or those that trigger a strobe light. Test your detectors once a month and change the batteries once a year. If you need assistance with checking your detectors or replacing their batteries, contact your local fire station.

**Know two ways out:** Plan two escape routes from every room in your home and practice using them. Make sure exits are not blocked by furniture or other items that might prevent your escape.

**Know how to unlock doors and windows:** Windows should open easily and fully to allow escape in an emergency. Those windows with security bars should be equipped with a quick-release latch.

**Know the location of building exits:** If you live in an apartment building, count the number of doorways between your apartment and the two nearest exits. During a fire, you may have to escape in the dark.

**If you are trapped during a fire:** Remain calm. Close all doors between you and the smoke. If there is a phone in the room, call 911 and tell the dispatcher where you are trapped. Stuff rags, towels, or clothing in the cracks around doors to keep smoke out. Wait at the window and signal firefighters by waving a light-colored cloth or a flashlight and wait to be rescued.

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